

REPRESENTATION ALLOWANCES

Proposed Appropriation Language

REPRESENTATION ALLOWANCES

For representation allowances as authorized, [\$8,175,000] \$8,175,000. (*Department of State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2009.*)

REPRESENTATION ALLOWANCES

Resource Summary

(\$ in thousands)

Appropriations	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Estimate	FY 2010 Request	Increase / Decrease
Funds	8,109	8,175	8,175	0

FY 2008 Actual reflects the rescission of 0.81% provided by the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2008 (P.L. 110-161, Division J).

Overview

Pursuant to Section 905 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended, Representation Allowances permit Ambassadors, Principal Officers at constituent posts, and other Foreign Service officers with vital contacts in the host country, to obtain partial reimbursement of costs incurred for official representation. These official contacts help establish and maintain close personal ties with local government officials and influential private citizens who have expertise in the fields of politics, economics, business, journalism, labor, and science. Representational functions are vehicles to convey U.S. foreign policy goals and objectives and to gather information central to the formulation of U.S. bilateral and multilateral policies.

Representation is vital to the Department's foreign policy objectives of advancing its economic interests, and maintaining national security interests. In addition to the normal bilateral events, the Department concentrates on representational activities that support U.S. positions on trade issues associated with the European Union (EU), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), Free Trade of the Americas (FTAA), African Growth and Opportunity Acts (AGOA) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

Program Description

The central feature of representational activities continues to be the promotion of American interests through the establishment and maintenance of solid working relationships with, and the gathering of information from, foreign officials and representatives. Funding is also used to promote economic activities through strengthening relationships among individuals (e.g., business and labor leaders) who perform duties such as trade promotion; protection of American business interests; economic, commercial, and labor reporting; and negotiations. Representation funding is also required for adherence to certain protocols or traditions that must be observed, such as the installation or inauguration of national leaders, recognition of deaths or marriages of prominent citizens, and presentation of credentials to heads of state.

Justification of Request

Funds requested for FY 2010 will continue support of U.S. national interests, economic activities, and other diplomatic functions at the more than 260 embassies, missions, and consulates worldwide. With the requested amount of \$8.2 million, the Department will stage appropriate representational events and apply this vital diplomatic tool to enhance the effectiveness of U.S. national and foreign policy interests.

REPRESENTATION ALLOWANCES

For example, missions in nations with Muslim populations often strengthen communication with the Muslim community through the hosting of annual Iftar dinners, to break the fast during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan. By hosting these Iftar dinners, Ambassadors and other mission officials are able to demonstrate tangible evidence of U.S. openness toward the Islamic faith and religious freedoms supported by the people of the United States. Many posts have reported that the events have given the mission excellent access to the Muslim community, and efforts in this respect have repeatedly resulted in very positive press.

Worldwide, missions also traditionally host Election Day/Night events to explain the U.S. election process and provide real-time election results to local news media and interested host-government officials and populations. These events foster discussions of political and social issues which provide a platform for advancing U.S. foreign policy.

Use of representation funds also facilitates less formal meetings and events that often serve to bring together diverse ethnic and religious groups and promote key U.S. pro-democracy objectives. For example in Burma, despite the military regime's attempts to keep its diverse population divided, representational events and informal roundtables have allowed a variety of ethnic and religious leaders to engage in dialogue about Burma's future and its path toward democracy.

Representation events can help foster relationships to promote U.S. interests, and can also be used to even more directly advance U.S. foreign policy. As an example, events hosted in Abidjan successfully paved the way for compromise in the implementation of programs that allow the Government of Cote d'Ivoire to meet the Harkin-Engle Protocols, which required that the cocoa region be almost free of child labor or child slavery by July 2008. A similar event pushed the cashew industry to develop a way forward to meet and expand their value added production goals which promotes prosperity.

Funds by Program Activity

(\$ in thousands)

	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Estimate	FY 2010 Request	Increase / Decrease
Commemorative and Ceremonial Requirements	277	277	277	0
Promotion of Economic Activities	610	608	608	0
Promotion of U.S. Citizens' Interests	210	214	214	0
Promotion of U.S. National Interests	5,207	5,217	5,217	0
Public Diplomacy	1,805	1,859	1,859	0
Total	8,109	8,175	8,175	0

Public Diplomacy

(\$ in thousands)

	Positions		Total Funds	Increase/ Decrease
	American	FSN		
FY 2010 Request	0	0	1,859	0

REPRESENTATION ALLOWANCES

Activities under Public Diplomacy aim to garner understanding and support for U.S. policies and values through interactions with influential individuals and organizations. Functions that include the local media, key political elites, academics, and members of non-governmental organizations are designed to assess the overseas public affairs climate and convey and reinforce acceptance of U.S. policies and values. These activities promote peaceful relations between the U.S. and other countries by fostering mutual understanding through academic, professional, and cultural activities.

Promotion of U.S. National Interests

(\$ in thousands)

	Positions		Total Funds	Increase/ Decrease
	American	FSN		
FY 2010 Request	0	0	5,217	0

Strengthening contacts with foreign officials, prominent citizens, and long-term residents who are knowledgeable in various fields enables Foreign Service officers to promote U.S. national interests more effectively. The majority of official representational expenditures are for receptions, small working luncheons, and informal dinners that help to establish and maintain personal relationships, and to reciprocate courtesies previously extended. These relationships permit officers to gather information used to report trends, policies and opinions abroad, to conduct negotiations, and to present or further the acceptance of American policies or viewpoints.

Promotion of U.S. Citizens' Interests

(\$ in thousands)

	Positions		Total Funds	Increase/ Decrease
	American	FSN		
FY 2010 Request	0	0	214	0

Establishing relationships with foreign officials in the country of their assignment allows Foreign Service officers to serve citizens' interests more responsively. Knowing the right people on an immediate basis can help them extend visa and immigration assistance, provide police and prison liaison, solve citizenship and related problems, arrange transportation of effects in the case of death, and arrange transportation and subsistence for destitute Americans overseas. Personal relationships are also important in developing and testing emergency plans, as well as dealing with the actual event of a natural disaster or act of terrorism.

REPRESENTATION ALLOWANCES

Promotion of Economic Activities

(\$ in thousands)

	Positions		Total Funds	Increase/ Decrease
	American	FSN		
FY 2010 Request	0	0	608	0

Foreign Service officers meet with foreign and American officials, business representatives, labor leaders, academics, and other individuals involved in production and trade investment in the country or district of their assignment. These contacts help them to perform duties of an economic nature (such as trade promotion, protection of American business interests, and economic, commercial and labor reporting) and conduct negotiations related to these activities.

Commemorative and Ceremonial Requirements

(\$ in thousands)

	Positions		Total Funds	Increase/ Decrease
	American	FSN		
FY 2010 Request	0	0	277	0

Ambassadors, Charges d'Affaires, and their representatives are frequently called upon to participate in ceremonial or commemorative occasions such as national days, installations or inaugurations of national leaders, deaths or marriages of prominent citizens, and presentation of credentials to heads of state. On these occasions certain protocols or traditions (such as the presentation of a wreath, flowers, or other articles) must be observed. Foreign Service officers overseas are also responsible for the presentation of visiting noted personages and personnel of visiting U.S. naval vessels and special U.S. Government aircraft to local leaders.

Funds by Object Class

(\$ in thousands)

	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Estimate	FY 2010 Request	Increase / Decrease
2500 Other Services	8,109	8,175	8,175	0
Total	8,109	8,175	8,175	0